

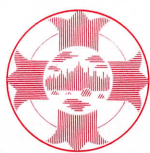
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Symposium on Nuremburg Code raises questions about medical ethics today

Internationally recognized scientists, physicians, ethicists and theologians discussed the impact of human experimentation that occurred in Nazi Germany on current ethical dilemmas in medical research at a two-day symposium at Boston University.

Titled "The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code: Relevance for Modern Medical Research," the symposium was sponsored by the Law, Medicine and Ethics Program at the Schools of Medicine and Public Health.

Included among the symposium's speakers were a survivor of the infamous Mengele Twin Study and a consultant to the judges at the Nuremberg Trial, during which Nazi doctors were prosecuted for "war crimes and crimes against humanity." The Nuremberg Code—a ten-point code on human experimentation articulated in the court decision—was designed as an international standard that, if followed, would prevent such atrocities from ever recurring.

Conference co-directors, George Annas, J.D., M.P.H., a professor of health law, and Michael Grodin, M.D., an associate professor of medical ethics, stated that it is important to examine issues present in Nazi Germany because they raise troubling ethical questions that still have not been addressed.

"People see the Holocaust and the human experimentation as an aberration, but the values that allowed the experimentation to occur are still present, to some extent, in mainstream medicine today," said Annas. He added, "Similar ethical issues are encountered when we consider care of the dying, physician-assisted suicide, clinical and underground trials of new AIDS drugs, fetal-tissue transplants and the future possibility of genetic engineering."

Grodin noted, "Many of the same things that caused physicians to lose perspective then, such as the quest for scientific knowledge and the supremacy of science and research, may still exist."

Presentations

During the conference, Grodin presented "The Origin of Nuremberg Tribunals: Prosecution and Judgment," in which he discussed how the Nuremberg Code was derived. In his presentation, Grodin also talked about the misunderstanding of the Hippocratic Oath, the American Medical Association code of ethics for research and the ethical norms in the world today. Annas presented "The Nuremberg Code in the U.S. Courts," in which he analyzed the legal status of the code and how it has been cited in U.S. courts.

Leonard Glantz, J.D., a professor and the acting director of SPH, presented "Attempts to Enact the Nuremberg Code into United States Law," in which he made the case that although the code has not been legally adopted, its principles have been ac-



Herbert Wotiz, Ph.D., director of the Hubert Humphrey Cancer Research Center, presents a plaque to Penny Bix, president of Aid for Cancer Research, in recognition of the group's generous contributions to BUMC. Story, page 2. (Photo by Bradford Herzog)

cepted and researchers do follow them. As the closing remarks for the symposium, Annas and Grodin presented "Where Do We Go from Here?"

Farb named chairman of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics

Dean Aram V. Chobanian recently announced the appointment of David H. Farb, Ph.D., as chairman of the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics at BUSM.

Farb comes to BUSM from the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn, where he served as a professor of anatomy and cell biology and as head of the Molecular Pharmacology Research Program. While there, he was elected as Presiding Officer of the Graduate School, headed its Curriculum Committee, the Committee on Computer Assisted Teaching and the Curriculum Committee on AIDS.

Farb has conducted pioneering research in the field of benzodiazepine pharmacology and has established an interdisciplinary laboratory that has made numerous fundamental contributions toward explaining the structure, function and cellular dynamics of the Y-aminobutyric acid receptor. He has received many awards and honors, including a Fogarty Senior International Fellowship, election to Sigma Xi and appointments to the Neurological Sciences Study Section of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and to the National Institutes of Health Technical Merit Review Panel for Contracts. Farb also is a member of the Corporation of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole.

Report shows psychological factors may improve immune function in AIDS patients

The results of a pilot study to determine the extent to which mental attitude affects the well-being of AIDS patients recently were presented by a group of BUSM researchers. The patients studied had chosen a macrobiotic approach to healing, combining a vegetarian diet with a healthy lifestyle that included little alcohol, no drugs and regular exercise.

Although many components of the macrobiotic lifestyle could affect the immune system, the researchers focused on the influence of mood and personality. Nine of the 19 AIDS patients participated by answering questionnaires that measured such psychological factors as depression, anger, anxiety, curiosity, commitment and acceptance of change (challenge). They also had their blood drawn at periodic intervals. Six healthy male volunteers, also following a macrobiotic regimen, answered the questionnaires as a comparison group.

The AIDS patients studied had improved immune measures, decreased mood disturbances and increased vigor, leading researchers to conclude that emotional-state and personality-trait measures had strong associations with immune measures that are important predictors of how AIDS is progressing. However, the researchers added that the study was too small to draw firm conclusions.

"This pilot study suggests that we need to look further into the role of the psyche in AIDS," says Elinor Levy, Ph.D., the principal investigator of the study and an associate professor of microbiology at BUSM.

Paul H. Black, M.D., chairman of the microbiology department, also was an investigator in the study, which is reported in a recent issue of *Brain, Behavior and Immunity*.

Recent findings in familial Alzheimer's disease presented at ASHG

BUSM researchers presented recent findings in familial Alzheimer's disease and psychological factors affecting the choice of DNA testing for cystic fibrosis at the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics.

Lindsay Farrer, Ph.D., an assistant professor of neurology and public health, presented a study indicating that familial Alzheimer's disease (AD) is caused by multiple mechanisms. Farrer and her associates studied more than 1,600 children of people with familial AD. The researchers found a distinct division in familial AD: an early-onset group, where family members who would get the disease tended to do so before age 58; and a late-onset group, where AD typically struck after age 58. These findings challenge the belief that each case of familial AD is in some way associated with a flawed dominant gene on chromosome 21. Farrer's research indicates that this is only true for the early-onset variety of AD and that there may be other genetic or even environmental factors to consider for late-onset AD.

Dorothy C. Wertz, Ph.D., a research professor of public health at SPH, was the first author on a poster session on DNA Testing for Cystic Fibrosis (CF): Psychosocial Factors Affecting Utilization by New England Families. Wertz and researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and the Eunice

Kennedy Shriver Center for Mental Retardation evaluated the psychosocial factors that influence family decision-making with regard to prenatal diagnosis. Anonymous questionnaires were distributed in six New England states to adults with CF and to parents of children with CF—a genetic disease of the mucus glands that results in pulmonary disease, usually strikes in childhood, and whose victims often die at a young age.

In general, the researchers found that prenatal DNA testing for CF is underutilized. The reasons cited for not seeking DNA testing included: no additional children were intended; the families were optimistic regarding the present and future health of their afflicted child; and personal opposition to abortion for CF.

Study shows breakfast program improves academic performance

Participants in the national School Breakfast Program (SBP)—designed to improve the nutrition of low-income children—also improve academically, according to a study conducted by researchers from BUSM, Boston City Hospital and the Tufts School of Nutrition.

The researchers evaluated the effects of the SBP on 1,023 third- through sixth-graders in six elementary schools in Lawrence, Mass. They compared the children's scores from basic skills tests given in 1986, before the program was offered, to scores from 1987, after the program had been in effect for three months. The researchers found that participation in the SBP was associated with a 5.44-point increase over previous scores when the SBP was not available.

"The study suggests that there are educational as well as dietary reasons why the SBP should be offered to low-income children and children at risk of skipping breakfast, such as those in single-parent families or in families in which both parents work," says Alan Meyers, M.D., an assistant professor of pediatrics at BUSM and the principal investigator of the study, which was published in a recent issue of the *American Journal of Diseases of Children*.

BUMC honors Aid for Cancer Research members at thank-you luncheon

A luncheon recently was held at BUSM in honor of Aid for Cancer Research (ACR), a volunteer group of 25 women that raises thousands of dollars per year for cancer research. Over the past 25 years, ACR has supported BUMC and Boston City Hospital through grants used to purchase needed supplies and equipment, and to fund fellowships.

During the luncheon, Herbert H. Wotiz, Ph.D., director of the Hubert Humphrey Cancer Research Center, noted that while the cost of research has risen enormously over the years, the amount of available funding has declined, and few people with good ideas are able to get support for their research. "It's people like you, who over the years consistently have supported cancer research through fellowships and equipment, that make our research possible," he said. "We hope and expect that we will continue this wonderful relationship with your group for years to come."



Governor Michael Dukakis declared Massachusetts as a participant in World AIDS Day which took place December 1, 1989. Among those with the Governor was Lee Strunin, Ph.D., second from left, an assistant professor of public health (social and behavioral sciences). The goal of World AIDS Day was to heighten awareness of AIDS as a global problem and to create the solidarity essential for the worldwide effort to combat it.

Universal health care and seeking help for AIDS among topics presented at the APHA

An analysis of the Massachusetts Universal Health Care legislation and a study examining the decision-making and help-seeking behaviors of people diagnosed with AIDS were among the presentations by SPH faculty members at the 117th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Chicago.

Abstracts from BUSM presented include: "AIDS Symptom Recognition and Help Seeking," by Daniel Merrigan, Ed.D., an assistant professor of public health (social and behavioral sciences); "Characteristics of Persons Who Ride with Drunk Drivers" and "Alcohol and Drugs: Beliefs About AIDS and Condom Use Among Massachusetts Adolescents," by Ralph Hingson, Sc.D., a professor of public health (social and behavioral sciences); "Prior Approval in the Pediatric Emergency Room: An Empirical Appraisal," "Who Volunteers: The Role of Time Banking (Service Credits) in Mobilizing Voluntary Aid to Disabled Older Citizens" and "Universal Health Insurance and Hospital Finance in Massachusetts: 18 Months Later," by Alan Sager, Ph.D., an associate professor of public health (health services).

Other presentations included: "Surviving Childhood: Equity, Chronic Disease and Financial Disaster," by William J. Bicknell, M.D., M.P.H., a professor of public health (health services); "Resource Utilization and Reimbursement Rates in the Home Health Care Industry," by Michael G. Trisolini, an associate director of program development at SPH; "Tobacco and Alcohol Use During Pregnancy and Labor in Nepal," by Sarah Degnan, M.P.H., deputy director of the Office of Special Projects at SPH; "Physician Satisfaction in a Major Chain of Investor-Owned Walk-in Centers" and "Physician Response to Financial Incentives," by Suzanne Cashman, Sc.D., an assistant professor of public health (health services); and "Health Seeking Strategies of Nepali Women," by Catherine Schlager, M.S., assistant director of program management at SPH.

Amaro receives funding to support study on health of Hispanic children

Hortensia Amaro, Ph.D., an associate professor of pediatrics and public health, has been awarded \$175,000 from the William T. Grant Foundation Faculty Scholars Program to continue research on how the health of Hispanic children and adolescents is impacted by depression, drinking and drug use in the family. According to Amaro, the few existing studies on the physical and mental health of Hispanic children suggest that Hispanic youths have disproportionately high rates of health problems, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and low educational achievement, in comparison to non-Hispanic white children.

The goal of the William T. Grant Faculty Scholars Program is to promote children's mental health by supporting investigators who work in the field of stress and coping for school-age children. The Foundation is also providing funding for Amaro to investigate methods of preventing drug use among adolescent girls.

BUSM faculty present work at AHA session on cardiovascular disease

Cardiology experts from BUSM presented new research in the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease at the Annual American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in New Orleans, La.

David P. Faxon, M.D., an associate professor of medicine, discussed a study indicating that, for elderly patients, in-hospital risks associated with angioplasty are lower than those for bypass surgery; Nicholas A. Ruocco, Jr., M.D., an assistant professor of medicine, presented data suggesting that angioplasty can benefit a larger patient population than previously indicated; William Kannel, M.D., a professor of medicine and former director of the Framingham Heart Study, described blood pressure trends among Framingham Heart Study patients and, in another presentation, discussed the relationship between age and cardiovascular disease; William Hollander, M.D., a professor of medicine and biochemistry, discussed how immunological changes taking place within blood vessels in response to atherosclerosis may play a major role in accelerating heart and blood-vessel disease.

School of Medicine and City Hospital host Osteoporosis Awareness Day

Approximately 60 people in the Boston area recently participated in Osteoporosis Awareness Day, sponsored by BUSM and Boston City Hospital. The participants received free bone-density scans, completed risk-factor questionnaires and discussed methods of prevention and treatment with experts.

Advising the participants were Michael F. Holick, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of medicine and director of the Vitamin D, Skin and Bone Research Laboratory at BUSM; Robert M. Levin, M.D., an associate professor of medicine; Stuart R. Chipkin, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine; Alberto Perez, M.D., a BUSM second-year endocrine fellow; and Shun Lee, a BUSM first-year endocrine fellow.

Briefly noted

Douglas A. Cotanche, Ph.D., an assistant professor of anatomy, recently was named to the editorial board of *Hearing Research*, a major international journal that publishes research papers on a broad spectrum of topics concerned with basic auditory mechanisms. Cotanche is involved in research on the development and regeneration of hair cells, the sensory transducer cells in the cochlea of the inner ear....**J. Worth Estes, M.D.**, a professor of pharmacology, presented "Public Pharmacology: Patent Medicines and How They Worked" at the American Medical

Writers Association annual conference....**Alan Peters, Ph.D.**, chairman of the Department of Anatomy, recently presented one of the special lectures at the Society for Neuroscience Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.. The topic of his lecture was "Neuronal Organization in the Cerebral Cortex....The Big Sister Association of Greater Boston honored **Oon Tian Tan, M.B.B.S.**, an associate professor of dermatology, at its ninth annual Celebrities Ball. Tan was recognized for her pioneering work in laser treatment of children's birthmarks.

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